

recovery and to begin rebuilding their lives, for obvious reasons. So, these victims should never expect that FEMA is going to come back weeks, months, and sometimes even years later and say: Oops, we made a mistake. Now you, the victim, are going to have to give back those funds that you have already put to good use.

To add insult to injury, FEMA's information on how disaster victims can appeal these decisions is incredibly confusing, and it is absolutely insufficient.

Remember, this is due to no fault of their own, but many disaster victims are faced with debt collectors and the full force of the Federal Government when it comes to repaying these funds.

This is absolutely unacceptable. People acting in good faith to rebuild should not be revictimized after they have properly relied upon FEMA's determination that they were qualified for the assistance that they did receive.

This bill, H.R. 539, is going to clarify that if FEMA makes an error, and there is no evidence of fraud, then the victim will not be revictimized. Their debt is automatically viewed as a hardship, and it is waived.

In addition, the bill would also require FEMA to report back to Congress, to us, on its error rates and tell us what they are doing to be more accurate.

Last Congress, this bill passed on the House floor and had bipartisan support. This Congress, the bill now has a companion version in the Senate, and I hope that we can see this legislation enacted into law this year and truly help disaster victims not only in my district but also across the Nation.

Madam Speaker, I encourage support for this bill. It is a good bill, and people don't need to be revictimized.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 539.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1330

#### EXPEDITED DELIVERY OF AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF 2021

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 468) to amend title 49, United States Code, to permit the use of incentive payments to expedite certain fed-

erally financed airport development projects.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 468

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Expedited Delivery of Airport Infrastructure Act of 2021".

#### SEC. 2. ALLOWABLE COST STANDARDS FOR AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 47110(b)(1) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "(1) if the cost necessarily" and inserting "(1)(A) if the cost necessarily";

(2) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting "; or"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(B) if the cost is an incentive payment incurred in carrying out the project described in subparagraph (A) that is to be provided to a contractor upon early completion of a project, if—

"(i) such payment does not exceed the lesser of 5 percent of the initial construction contract amount or \$1,000,000;

"(ii) the level of contractor's control of, or access to, the worksite necessary to shorten the duration of the project does not negatively impact the operation of the airport;

"(iii) the contract specifies application of the incentive structure in the event of unforeseeable, non-weather delays beyond the control of the contractor;

"(iv) nothing in any agreement with the contractor prevents the airport operator from retaining responsibility for the safety, efficiency, and capacity of the airport during the execution of the grant agreement; and

"(v) the Secretary determines that the use of an incentive payment is likely to increase airport capacity or efficiency or result in cost savings as a result of shortening the project's duration;"

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 47110(e)(7) of title 49, United States Code, is amended in the heading by striking "PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AIRPORTS" and inserting "PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM AIRPORTS".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 468.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 468, the Expedited Delivery of Airport Infrastructure Act of 2021. Introduced by the committee's ranking member, SAM GRAVES, the bill incentivizes the early completion of airport projects funded by the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program.

As the global pandemic begins to subside and the number of vaccinated

Americans has steadily grown, the number of passengers traveling by air has dramatically increased. In fact, last month, the Transportation Security Administration recorded the highest number of daily passengers screened at U.S. airports since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing airports to find ways to keep up with the growing passenger demand.

This legislation will help address this need by allowing airports to use their Airport Improvement Program funding to offer incentive payments to contractors for early completion of airport development projects.

Importantly, H.R. 468 includes conditions that ensure projects completed early do not have a negative impact on airport safety, efficiency, or capacity.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 468, which is the Expedited Delivery of Airport Infrastructure Act of 2021, and I want to thank Aviation Subcommittee Ranking Member GARRET GRAVES for cosponsoring the bill.

H.R. 468 provides airports with some commonsense tools to incentivize the early completion of airport projects using AIP funds, or Airport Improvement Program funds.

Under this bill, the use of AIP funds for incentive payments is left to the discretion of the airport operator, but the benefits of incentive payments are already well-known in the surface transportation sector.

This bill is going to allow airports to expedite the delivery of airport projects, take better advantage of short construction seasons, relieve operational disruptions that result from such projects and, obviously, save the taxpayer money.

This is a commonsense practice that is utilized in so many other Federal infrastructure projects and it does not increase Federal spending.

H.R. 468 is supported by the American Association of Airport Executives, the Airports Council International, and the Associated General Contractors of America.

This bill was introduced in Congress last year. It passed the House under suspension of the rules, and it was done by voice vote. I am hopeful that we can get this commonsense bill across the finish line this Congress. I would very much urge support of the legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), the ranking member of the Aviation Subcommittee.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Chairman

DEFAZIO; the sponsor of the bill, the ranking member of the committee, SAM GRAVES; as well as Aviation Ranking Member RICK LARSEN of Washington State.

Madam Speaker, we need to be able to have the authority to make incentive payments. We have seen an extraordinary shift in aviation travel. In April of last year, there was a 95 percent reduction in airline passengers. We recently saw TSA screen the same number of passengers as before the pandemic.

The aviation demand is coming back with a vengeance. Our airports are crowded. Our airlines are packed. Our airplanes are packed.

What this allows the FAA to do is to provide incentive payments to expedite the completion of construction projects at airports. This is for safety. This is for additional capacity. This is going to ensure that the aviation industry, that our airport infrastructure can keep up with increased demand.

And as the ranking member said, this same expedited authority and incentive payments is allowed in other forms of infrastructure. So I want to thank the ranking member, SAM GRAVES, for bringing up this common-sense legislation.

Madam Speaker, I urge its adoption.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, this is common-sense legislation. It doesn't cost the government any money. And the fact of the matter is, it is already being done in so many other areas of transportation projects.

Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 468.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE COORDINATION ACT

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2016) to amend the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 to develop a study regarding streamlining and consolidating information collection and preliminary damage assessments, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2016

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Federal Disaster Assistance Coordination Act”.

### SEC. 2. STUDY TO STREAMLINE AND CONSOLIDATE INFORMATION COLLECTION AND PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1223 of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254) is amended to read as follows:

#### “SEC. 1223. STUDY TO STREAMLINE AND CONSOLIDATE INFORMATION COLLECTION AND PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS.

“(a) INFORMATION COLLECTION.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, the Administrator, in coordination with the Small Business Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Disaster Assistance Working Group of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and other appropriate agencies, shall—

“(1) conduct a study and develop a plan, consistent with law, under which the collection of information from disaster assistance applicants and grantees will be modified, streamlined, expedited, efficient, flexible, consolidated, and simplified to be less burdensome, duplicative, and time consuming for applicants and grantees; and

“(2) develop a plan for the regular collection and reporting of information on Federal disaster assistance awarded, including the establishment and maintenance of a website for presenting the information to the public.

“(b) PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, the Administrator, in consultation with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, shall convene a working group on a regular basis with the Secretary of Labor, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the Secretary of Transportation, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, and other appropriate agencies as the Administrator considers necessary, to—

“(1) identify and describe the potential areas of duplication or fragmentation in preliminary damage assessments after disaster declarations;

“(2) determine the applicability of having one Federal agency make the assessments for all agencies; and

“(3) identify potential emerging technologies, such as unmanned aircraft systems, consistent with the requirements established in the FEMA Accountability, Modernization and Transparency Act of 2017 (42 U.S.C. 5121 note), to expedite the administration of preliminary damage assessments.

“(c) COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.—The Administrator shall submit one comprehensive report that comprises the plans developed under subsections (a)(1) and (a)(2) and a report of the findings of the working group convened under subsection (b), which may include recommendations, to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

“(d) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The comprehensive report developed under subsection (c) shall be made available to the public and posted on the website of the Federal Emergency Management Agency—

“(1) in pre-compressed, easily downloadable versions that are made available in all appropriate formats; and

“(2) in machine-readable format, if applicable.

“(e) SOURCES OF INFORMATION.—In preparing the comprehensive report, any publi-

cation, database, or web-based resource, and any information compiled by any government agency, nongovernmental organization, or other entity that is made available may be used.

“(f) BRIEFING.—Not later than 180 days after submission of the comprehensive report, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or a designee, and a member of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, or a designee, shall brief, upon request, the appropriate congressional committees on the findings and any recommendations made in the comprehensive report.”.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The item relating to section 1223 in the table of contents of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-254) is amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 1223. Study to streamline and consolidate information collection and preliminary damage assessments.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2016.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2016, the Federal Disaster Assistance Coordination Act, introduced by Representatives GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN and PETERS. This legislation amends the Disaster Recovery Reform Act to help Federal agencies streamline and consolidate information collection and preliminary damage assessments following disasters.

When a major disaster occurs, Americans don't have time to wait for bureaucracy. Today, however, too many barriers stand between emergency response and Americans in crisis due to disaster.

Federal recovery assistance following major disasters is currently hampered by inefficient information collection and assessments conducted by multiple agencies.

This bill will remove information collection barriers that currently impede disaster aid. It creates a working group to identify duplicative assessments and propose their elimination.

Further, it would streamline Federal disaster recovery efforts by concluding that a single agency is sufficient to conduct damage assessments to account for the needs of disaster victims in 2021.

It is 2021, and we can and should be doing this smarter. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.